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A STUDY OF A CLASSICAL LEADER: SUN TZU
AND HIS INFLUENCE ON MAO TSE-TUNG

Major John L. Washington, Jr. 86-2650

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MAO TSE-TUNG

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
requirements for graduation.

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| 19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) This project explores the classical view of war as prescribed by Sun Tzu and analyzes his influence on Mao Tse-tung. Chapter One is a general introduction. Chapter Two describes the times in which Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung lived. Chapter Three summarizes Sun Tzu's military strategy as outlined in his classical treatise, The Art of War. It also describes his leadership characteristics. Chapter Four summarizes Mao Tse-tung's military strategy and leadership traits and compares them to Sun Tzu's "Thirteen Principles." Chapter Five provides a comparative summary of Sun Tzu's and Mao Tse-tung's leadership traits based on their roles as military commanders. | | | | |
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PREFACE

The original intent of this research project was to focus on the leadership traits of Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung. Additionally, since it was felt that Sun Tzu had considerable influence on Mao Tse-tung's leadership views, a natural follow-on would be to show the extent of this influence. Instead, as the project evolved, the research indicated that Sun Tzu's influence on Mao Tse-tung was restricted to military strategy and that Mao's leadership style was based on his contemporary relationships and was further defined by his communist beliefs.

The primary source document for Sun Tzu was Samuel B. Griffith's translation of Sun Tzu's treatise The Art of War. Because Mao Tse-tung was more contemporary, the sources for his perspective on war were quite extensive.

I wish to thank Dr. Chipman of the Squadron Officers School for allowing me the opportunity to work on this exciting project. I learned about two very dynamic leaders.

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Major John L. Washington, Jr., graduated from San Diego State University in 1973 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. In 1976, he earned a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma. In 1983 he earned a second Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from St. Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas. He is a graduate of Squadron Officer School in residence and is currently attending the Air Command and Staff College as a member of the class of 1986.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Sun Tzu's essays on The Art of War form the earliest of known treatises on the subject, but have never been surpassed in comprehensiveness and depth of understanding. They might well be termed the concentrated essence of wisdom on the conduct of war. (3:v).

Sun Tzu is one of the greatest military men to have ever lived. His classic The Art of War is as fresh and viable today as when it was originally written over two and a half thousand years ago.(1:1). Yet because of a tendency to study only Western military leaders, Sun Tzu's genius was not revealed to the West until 1772 by a Jesuit missionary to Peking, Father J.J.M. Amiot. (3:ix) Currently, at least one Western nation now makes this treatise obligatory reading for its political-military impact, and another has used it to become a super power. (1:2)

This project will explore the classical view of leadership as prescribed by Sun Tzu and show how his treatise, written between 400-320 B.C., affected the military views of Mao Tse-tung. (3:11) However, because successful leadership must be supported by solid military strategy, I will also discuss both Sun Tzu's and Mao Tse-tung's military strategies in relationship with their leadership attributes. The paper is organized as follows:

Chapter One provides an introduction to the purpose and scope of this paper along with an outline of its contents.

Chapter Two gives a brief description of China during the period Sun Tzu is reported to have lived. The primary source for this chapter is Dr. Samuel B. Griffith's translation of the treatise from Sun Hsing-yen, a leading Chinese authority on Sun Tzu whose text has been considered the standard for over two hundred years. Additionally, a brief biography of Mao Tse-tung is given to provide an understanding of his period and the influences that helped to shape his leadership characteristics.

Chapter Three is a survey of the concept of military leadership as identified by Sun Tzu. Focusing directly on Sun Tzu's writings, this chapter illustrates his unique views on leadership and military strategy.

Chapter Four discusses Mao Tse-tung's role as leader of the Red Army and eventual political leader of China. It explores the development of Mao's leadership style and the military strategy he used to defeat Chiang Kai-Shek and the Japanese.

Chapter Five discusses Sun Tzu's influence on Mao Tse-tung and illustrates how his influence goes beyond the battlefield and endures into the supervision of the state. There appears to be little doubt that Sun Tzu's classic has had a profound effect on China's modern military thinking. Chiang Kai-shek, leader of Nationalist China, was a known student and collector of Sun Tzu's works. (12:132).

But it was the late Mao Tse-tung, leader of the greatest social revolution in human history, who provided the best example of the validity of Sun Tzu's warfare tenets. A prime example of Sun Tzu's influence is borne out by China's attempt to fit him into "the appropriate Marxist-Leninist-Maoist tradition." (12:133)

Chapter Two

BACKGROUND

Sun Tzu is reported to have been a native of Chi during a period known as the Warring States. During this time (around 400 B.C.), iron technology had flourished to the point where individual ironmasters were hiring hundreds of employees, and rulers had established foundries to build weapon arsenals. Warfare had become particularly brutal, which was a radical change from the previous time poetically called Spring and Autumn when chivalry was in vogue. An example of this was the alleged ordering by the Viscount of Wu that three thousand condemned men commit suicide in the face of the enemy. This had the effect of making the opposing army flee in terror. (3:33)

Armies were now made up of conscripted peasants led by a professional officer corps. A general staff was created, consisting of various specialists, such as weather forecasters, map makers, and engineers. It was now possible for a person who was not of noble blood to rise to the rank of commander-in-chief. The soldier of the Warring period was better armed, equipped, and trained than his predecessor, who used short swords and bronze tipped spears. The foot soldier now carried swords and spears (some between 9 and 18 feet long), wore armor, and was supported by longbowmen. Additionally, with the introduction of crossbows with their tremendous striking power, the chariot as a weapon of war was virtually eliminated. (3:36)

This was the time when larger states were attempting to absorb smaller states. There were eight major states during this time period: Ch'i, Chu, Ch'in, Wei, Han, Chao, Yen, and Yueh. The latter two states played no major parts in the wars which were to eventually unite China. Because all the major combatants had the ability to raise large, well-equipped armies, the army which won the majority of battles would be the one that was best led. Therefore, rulers surrounded themselves with professional strategists, and those who led the king's armies to victory were well rewarded. Conversely, those who did not were "unceremoniously pickled, sawn in half, boiled, minced, or torn apart by chariots." (3:25)

It was into this environment that Sun Tzu was to make his appearance. Legend states that he was called to the court of King Ho-lu of Wu to demonstrate the wisdom of his (Art of War) "thirteen chapters." While there, he impressed the king and was subsequently given command of his armies. (1:6). However, Samuel Griffith, a translator of the Art of War, does not necessarily agree with this legend, or that Sun Tzu ever led King Ho-lu's armies. What he does agree with is the fact that Sun Tzu did exist, "otherwise his words would have died as did those of his less original contemporaries." (3:29) As previously mentioned, Sun Tzu's influence on China's future was best evidenced by Mao Tse-tung.

Mao Tse-tung was born December 26, 1893, in Shao-shan, Hunan province. He was the eldest of four children. His parents were peasants, but they were fairly well-off in comparison to other peasants of that area. Mao began working in the fields at the age of six and continued this even after entering a local primary school, where he studied the traditional Confucian classics. (14:133) Mao and his father constantly quarreled because of differing views on Mao's future.

In a biography written by Edgar Snow, an American journalist, Mao describes his childhood as being filled with constant conflict with his father who he describes as a "severe taskmaster" whom he quarreled with over his desire to attend school rather than work on the farm. (11:114) Mao at one point actually ran away from home to continue his studies. Eventually, his father realized that his son was never going to be just a merchant farmer, and agreed to let him continue his schooling.

In 1909, Mao left home for good and traveled to Hsiang, a neighboring town, where he entered primary school and did quite well. At the urgings of his instructors and a fellow classmate, he left for Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, hoping to enter middle school. He was accepted, but, due to the turbulence of the time, he only remained in school a half year. (11:122) In 1911, the year that Sun Yat-Sen launched the overthrow of the Ch'ing dynasty, Mao joined Sun Yat-Sen's National Army. However, after a few months, he resigned and returned to school, spending half a year studying alone in the provincial library, a study habit that was to continue throughout his life. (11:125-127)

By 1918, Mao graduated from the Hunan First Normal School and moved to Peking, the national capital, where he attended Peking University as a part-time student. Because he was not a regular student, his involvement with other students was sparse. He spent most of his time working and studying in the University library. Yet, he did find time to establish contact with intellectual radicals who later figured prominently in the Chinese Communist Party. (14:135)

In 1919, he returned to Hunan to become a primary school principal. He also began to engage in radical political activities and published the Hsiang Chaing Review which was critical of the current Chinese government.

When the Communist party was organized in Shanghai in 1921, Mao attended as the representative from Hunan, because of his organization's activities in that province. Returning to Hunan, he concentrated on labor and party organization, propaganda, and the Peasant Movement Training Institute. Later, he worked closely with Sun Yat Sen's Republican followers and held positions in the Executive Bureau of both the Chinese Communist party and the Kuomintang, a Nationalist Chinese party.(11:142)

After the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, Mao and the Communists continued to work with the Kuomintang to help overthrow the remaining warlords. However, in 1927 Chiang Kai-Shek gained control of the Kuomintang and reversed the policy of cooperation with the Communists. On 12 April 1927, he "commanded the complete extermination of the Communists and Socialists in the city. " (7:89) During this purge Mao's wife, Kai Hui, was captured and executed by the Kuomintang. Eventually Mao and a number of other Chinese Communists fled to the mountains in South China where he formed a rural base with the help of two bandit chiefs, Yuan and Wang. From this fusion of Communist leadership (Mao) and the help of a guerrilla force led by Chu Teh, Mao began his climb to the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

During this period Mao established himself as Political Commissar of the First Red Army Corps and began to formulate his tactics of guerrilla warfare based on Sun Tzu's Art of War. In November 1931, the first All-China Congress of Soviets convened at Juichin, and the "Provisional Worker's and People's Government" was established with Mao as chairman

When Chiang Kai-Shek's encircling armies attacked Mao at Juichin, Kiangsi, he was forced to begin his legendary march of 6,000 miles. On this journey, Mao started with approximately 100,000 soldiers and civilians; he

arrived in Pao-An with only 20,000. Having survived floods, enemy troops, harassment, and bitter cold, Mao established his headquarters at Shensi in March 1935. There he continued to solidify his position as leader of the Chinese Communist party.

The Japanese invasion of China in 1937 forced another Kuomintang and Communist coalition. Strangely, his communist brother Stalin backed Chaing Kai-Shek during the war against Japan. Stalin went so far as to sign a treaty of peace and non-aggression with Chiang and supplied him with arms and aircraft to fight the Japanese. Later, Stalin was to find out he had clearly backed the wrong man. (4:150)

During the years of war with Japan, Mao continued to work not only to defeat the Japanese, but to expand his worker's and people's government and firmly established himself as a military and political leader. (14:136) In 1945, Mao effectively controlled an area that included over a hundred million people. He was now ready to make known his full intention regarding his party's future.

On 23 April 1945, at the Seventh National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao stated their objective "to defeat the Japanese aggressor, liberate the whole people and build a new democratic China under the leadership of our Party." (19:93)

This was finally accomplished on October 1, 1949, when Mao declared that "the Central People's Government is the sole legal government representing all the people of the People's Republic of China." (7:239) Mao Tse-tung, along with the founders of the Han and Ming dynasties, had become one of only three peasants who rose up to rule all of China in a single lifetime. (14:136)

Chapter Three

SUN TZU'S LEADERSHIP VIEWS

Sun Tzu described thirteen axioms which he considered essential for a military leader to be successful in war:

1. Estimates: The first axiom contends that the planning stage should be appraised in terms of five fundamental factors:

- (1.) Moral influence - that which causes the people to be in harmony with their leaders.
- (2.) Weather - the interaction of natural forces: the effects of winter's cold and summer's heat and the conduct of military operations in accordance with the seasons.
- (3.) Terrain - whether the ground is traversed with ease or difficulty, whether it is open or constricted, and whether it provides good or poor chances of survival.
- (4.) Command - the attributes which describe a military leader, such as wisdom, sincerity, humanity, courage, and strictness.
- (5.) Doctrine - authority delegated to subordinates, such as organization, logistical support, and control of the forces. (3:63-65)

We will return to one of these factors, "Command," later. For now, it is important to understand that Sun Tzu incorporated each of these factors into his overall evaluation of an effective commander. After taking these five factors into consideration, he turned to the battle itself.

2. Waging War: Sun Tzu argued that since victory is the main objective of war, the quicker this is accomplished, the better. "If this is delayed, weapons are blunted and morale depressed." (3:73) He further argues that a country does not benefit from a protracted war because it becomes hard pressed to support the army, and the people become destitute. Additionally, he felt it was important to keep troops motivated to victory. Thus, he spoke of keeping his men keyed up to fight as an essential part of winning through such tactics as the promise of riches (spoils), or by reminding his men of the consequences of defeat. He concludes his precept on waging war by reiterating that "what is essential in war is victory, not prolonged operations. . . therefore, the general who understands war is the minister of the people's fate and arbiter of the nation's destiny." (3:76)

3. Offensive Strategy: Generally, the objective of war is "to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this." (3:77) The best way to accomplish this, according to Sun Tzu, is to attack the enemy's strategy. His plans called for engaging the enemy's forces in open battle. However, prior to attacking, he stressed the importance of knowing the enemy's strength in terms of material and men, and planning the attack accordingly.

When ten to the enemy's one, surround him; When five times his strength, attack him; If double his strength, divide him; If equal in numbers, engage him; If weaker numerically, be capable of withdrawal; and if in all respects unequal, be capable of eluding him, for a small force is but booty for one more powerful. (3:80)

4. Disposition (Shape of the Soldiers): Although Sun Tzu believed in maintaining the offensive, he did not neglect his defensive position. He realized it was as important to be prepared for an attack as it was to launch it. This did not mean that a leader should remain on the defensive and wait for the enemy to attack before launching his own forces. Rather, it implies

that a good leader is aware of what his force is capable of and acts accordingly. (3:87) Because of this, a good leader is capable of predicting victory before he engages his opponent. This positive attitude is felt by his troops who will advance knowing that their leader has prepared for all contingencies.

5. Energy (Potential): Sun Tzu believed that each individual should be employed according to his talents. In this respect, he spoke of using normal and extraordinary forces. While the normal force engages the enemy, the commander attacks with his extraordinary force, thus confusing the enemy. The two forces acting in unison are a potent combination. To better illustrate this axiom, Sun Tzu uses the following metaphors:

The musical notes are only five in number, but their melodies are so numerous that one cannot hear them all. . . . The primary colours are only five in number, but their combinations are so infinite that one cannot visualize them all. . . . In battle there are only the normal and the extraordinary forces, but their combinations are so limitless, none can comprehend them all. (3:91-92)

6. Weaknesses and Strengths: Sun Tzu defined this precept through the use of subtlety and secrecy--seeking the enemy's weakness and maintaining fluid tactics. (2:60) He maintained that a good leader must be deceptive in the movements of his forces; ie., he must strike where the enemy does not expect and disengage quickly, leaving some obvious but unimportant clue for him to follow. "That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg, use the science of weak points and strong." (1:25)

7. Manoeuvre (Flexibility in application): Sun Tzu considered this axiom as the most difficult. He stated, "what is so difficult about manoeuvre is to make the devious route the most direct and to turn misfortune to advantage." (3:102)

An army requires logistical support, good communication, and discipline. When the army begins to move, all these requirements are amplified. The commander then has to weigh the objective against his ability to move his force as efficiently as possible. In citing an example of effective troop movement, Sun Tzu points out that it does no good to vigorously pursue an enemy only to arrive with 1/10th of your men due to fatigue. A better method would be to single out the most powerful warriors and set out with them to reach the objective, knowing that the bulk of the force will arrive later to help defend or pursue the objective.(3:104) The essence of this axiom is to utilize force in accordance with the ability to control it. Sun Tzu closes his statement on manoeuvre with several precautions concerning enemy movement: "When he pretends to flee, do not pursue. . . do not attack his elite troops. . . do not gobble proffered baits. . . do not thwart an enemy returning homewards. . . leave your enemy a way of escape and do not press an enemy at bay." (3:109-110) All of the above precautions are designed to enable a leader to defeat the enemy without useless sacrifice of his own troops.

8. The nine variables: The nine variables of tactics are as follows:

- (1.) You should not encamp in low-lying ground.
- (2.) In communicating ground, unite with your allies.
- (3.) You should not linger in desolate ground.
- (4.) In enclosed ground, resourcefulness is required.
- (5.) In death ground, fight.
- (6.) There are some roads not to follow.
- (7.) There are some troops to avoid fighting.
- (8.) There are some cities not to assault.
- (9.) There is some ground which should not be contested. (3:110)

Sun Tzu contends that it is illogical to camp in low-lying ground because then one's forces could be easily surrounded. He also advises that, when fighting in a country where the high roads intersect, joining up with allied forces can prevent attacks from the flanks. He cautions leaders not to fight for an area that serves no strategical purpose (desolate ground) and warns them to use resourcefulness if they are fighting in a closed-in area which leaves no room for escape (death ground). He also points out that although main roads may be the shortest routes, they often lead through ground susceptible to ambush. Therefore, unless these roads are considered tactically expedient, they should be avoided. As with his other axioms, he closes with some precautions: Do not attack troops that are being used as bait or that appear to be well-controlled. (3:111-112) Do not attack a well-fortified city; bypass it and attack cities that are poorly defended and weak. (1:37) Do not fight for ground that will be difficult to defend and offers no advantage. It will probably be counter-attacked, causing many casualties. (3:113)

9. Marches: As has already been stated, the army on the move is extremely difficult to manage. Sun Tzu's ninth axiom emphasizes the positioning of forces for advantage in battle. He counsels leaders to camp on the high ground, enabling them to fight downhill, and to place their troops in the sun, thus providing them a more healthful environment. (3:116-117)

Additionally, he gives clues to be watchful for in determining the enemy's motivation: An enemy that is close but hesitates to attack is waiting for a more favorable position. When birds take flight or animals flee, be aware of possible ambush. Rising dust in scattered positions indicates an army that is making camp. Dust in high straight columns indicates the approach of chariots, whereas low-hanging, widespread dust signifies that an

infantry is approaching. (3:119) Pay particular attention to an army that feeds its horses with grain, kills its cattle for food, and then fails to hang its cooking pots over their campfires. This is a sign that they will not return to their tents and plan on fighting to the death. (1:47)

10. Terrain: The type of ground (terrain) can play an important part in a battle plan. Sun Tzu classified ground according to its nature, as follows:

(1.) Accessible - Ground which affords relatively easy travel for both sides. Therefore, the advantage goes to whomever can take the high position first.

(2.) Entrapping - An area that is easy to get out of, but difficult to return to.

(3.) Indecisive - Ground that is equally disadvantageous for both sides.

(4.) Constricted - Ground which could be blocked off. Thus, a good commander could wait for the enemy to appear and attack him as he entered.

(5.) Precipitous - Ground which is elevated. It is paramount to take the heights and wait for the attack. If the enemy has this ground, do not follow; rather, try to lure him off it and then attack.

(6.) Distant - Ground where two armies of equal strength are separated by a vast expanse of land, it is not profitable to attack. Sun Tzu concludes that "the nature of the ground is the fundamental factor in aiding the army to set up its victory." (3:124-125)

11. The nine Varieties of Ground: The nine varieties of ground refer to areas the leader seeks to conquer for territorial expansion. Sun Tzu described the nine varieties of ground as follows:

(1.) Dispersive Ground consists of the leader's own territory. The problem here is to stop desertions, for the troops, being close to their families, may want to return home.

(2.) Frontier Ground consists of land slightly inside of enemy territory. Here, the leader must be on the lookout for desertion, as his troops are still close to the homeland.

(3.) Key Ground is important to both forces for its strategic position.

(4.) Communicating Ground is readily accessible to both forces. This ground is level and can be fortified or evacuated quite easily.

(5.) Focal Ground is land enclosed by three states. Whoever controls this area has the ability to control the empire.

(6.) Serious Ground lies deep within enemy territory, thus making it very difficult for the advancing troops to retreat.

(7.) Difficult Ground describes land that is difficult to traverse, such as mountains, forests, swamps, and marshlands.

(8.) Encircled Ground refers to hemmed-in, constricted terrain.

(9.) Death Ground refers to ground which is completely surrounded by the enemy. An army fighting on this ground survives only if it fights with desperate courage. (3:130-133)

Sun Tzu gave strict advice on fighting on each of these different types of grounds. He cautioned leaders not to fight on dispersive ground nor to stop in frontier borderlands, but rather to unify their armies' determination and keep their forces closely linked. He warned leaders not to attack an enemy who holds key ground, and to keep a close watch on their rear. He also advised leaders not to allow their forces to be separated on communicating ground and to prepare strong defenses. Sun Tzu also cautioned leaders to seek allies on focal ground and to ensure a continuous

flow of supplies on serious ground. In addition, he cautioned them to traverse difficult ground as rapidly as possible and to encircle devious ground so as to avoid being ambushed or cut off. On death ground, he warns leaders to make the soldiers understand that there is no chance of survival unless they fight.(3:130-133)

There is undoubtedly some repetition between axioms eight (nine variables), nine (marches), ten (terrain), and eleven (nine varieties of ground). This repetition is generally attributed to changes that were made in Sun Tzu's writings as they were passed down through generations. (2:90)

12. Attack by fire: Sun Tzu's twelfth axiom relates to the use of fire as part of an attack. He states, "There are five methods of attacking with fire. The first is to burn personnel; the second, to burn stores; the third, to burn equipment; the fourth, to burn arsenals; and the fifth, to use incendiary missiles."(3:141)

Sun Tzu contends that once the fire is started, the leader should be prepared to take advantage of the ensuing panic. His attack should be timed to coincide with the fire at its most destructive period. (2:94-95) He argues that fire is a valuable asset in war and that a leader who knows how to utilize it is both intelligent and strong. (3:142)

13. Employment of Secret Agents: The thirteenth and final axiom relates to the employment of spies. Sun Tzu described five classes of spies:

- (1.) The local spy is an inhabitant of the enemy's country.
- (2.) The inside spy is typically one of the enemy's local officials.
- (3.) The double agent is an enemy spy who now works for the opposition.
- (4.) The expendable spy is one who is planted to deliberately pass on false information.

(5.) The living agent is a spy who returns with valuable information.
(3:144-146)

Spies play a crucial role in the waging of war, for they are the eyes and ears of the leader. Because of this, spies are given liberal rewards and have an intimate ear to their leader. Sun Tzu admonishes that

One who confronts his enemy for many years in order to struggle for victory in a decisive battle yet who, because he begrudges rank, honours, and a few hundred pieces of gold, remains ignorant of his enemy's situation, is completely devoid of humanity. Such a man is no general; no support to his sovereign; no master of victory.(3:144).

It is obvious from reading the preceding thirteen axioms that, to Sun Tzu, war was a science. In the first axiom, or planning stage, he listed five fundamental factors that needed to be taken into consideration prior to entering into battle. These were moral influence, weather, terrain, command, and doctrine. Each of these principles emphasized important aspects to be considered prior to actual conflict. However, because the primary focus of this chapter is to discuss Sun Tzu's command traits, I will not discuss the other four principles of the planning stage.

The fourth principle, "Command," equated to leadership style and dictated that commanders should possess five specific character traits: wisdom, sincerity, humaneness, courage, and strictness.(3:65) Sun Tzu described these traits as follows:

If wise, a commander is able to recognize changing circumstances and to act expediently. If sincere, his men will have no doubt of the certainty of rewards and punishment. If humane, he loves mankind, sympathizes with others, and appreciates their industry and toil. If courageous, he gains victory by seizing opportunity without hesitation. If strict, his troops are disciplined because they are in awe of him and are

afraid of punishment . . . if a general is not courageous, he will be unable to conquer doubts or to create great plans. (3:65)

Throughout Sun Tzu's writing, he constantly returns to these five traits. He describes the wise leader as one who knows how to properly employ each individual according to his talents. He expounds on this point by stating, "a skilled commander seeks victory from the situation and does not demand it of his subordinates." (3:93)

Sun Tzu believed that sincerity inspires confidence in a leader's ability. He spoke of General Han Hsin who calmly stated, "We will destroy the Chao army and then meet for a meal." General Hsin then proceeded to defeat the Chao army and, after breakfasting, beheaded Lord Ch'eng An.(3:86)

Sun Tzu also contends that if a humane leader "regards his men as infants, they will march with him into the deepest valleys. (If) he treats them as his own beloved sons, . . . they will die for him." (3:128)

Sun Tzu considered unbridled courage to be a disadvantage, for as he points out, "A general who is stupid and courageous is a calamity." (3:114) Rather, he favored a leader who displayed courage by his actions: "In dangerous places he (the leader) must dismount and walk." (3:129)

However, he cautioned leaders against being overly strict or inconsistent. According to Sun Tzu, it is particularly important for a leader to first gain his men's loyalty lest their morale be broken. After that, discipline could be applied: "If they [the soldiers] are ruled with kindness and ordered with strictness, then victory may be said to be certain." (9:17)

Conversely, he also spoke of five dangerous faults of a leader: recklessness, cowardice, a quick temper, delicacy of honor, and being overly compassionate. He felt that recklessness leads to destruction of the leader as

well as his men, while cowardice leads to hesitation in battle and capture. A leader with a hasty temper that is provoked by insults does not consider all the facts before attacking. One delicate of honor is easily baited; the overly-compassionate man fears for his men and therefore misses long-term gains. (2:70) Any commander who fell prey to these undesirable traits was headed for disaster.

Sun Tzu's thirteen axioms were designed to insure victory in war if followed. Therefore, although he did classify certain traits as being desirous of a commander, these traits were incorporated as part of his overall military strategy and were to be used in the planning stage to evaluate the commander's potential for success. The commander who possessed the qualities of wisdom, sincerity, humanity, courage, and strictness had the potential to be a successful leader. But these qualities alone were not enough. He also had to avoid the pitfalls of recklessness, a quick temper, being overly solicitous of his men, engrossed in matters of honor, or showing signs of cowardice to his men. If he could keep in mind that war is based on deception and that "his primary target is the mind of the opposing commander; the victorious situation, a product of his creative imagination," he would be a winner. (3:41)

It is to Mao's credit that he carefully avoided the pitfalls described by Sun Tzu and applied the lessons of Sun Tzu's axioms to his own military strategy and leadership style.

Chapter Four

MAO TSE TUNG'S LEADERSHIP VIEWS

At the Sixth Plenum of the central committee in November 1938, Mao stated, "Every Communist must understand this truth: Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. Our principle is that the Party commands the gun: the gun shall never be allowed to command the Party." (10:290)

This is an important point to keep in mind, for to Mao a political and military leader were the same. This point is constantly hammered on throughout his writings and commentaries. It is not significant that Mao sought to control his generals' thoughts and actions by stressing the importance of the party over military thought. This was in keeping with traditional communist doctrine since the time of Lenin. What is significant is that Mao--unlike Marx, Lenin, and Stalin--took an additional step and set down in print his own war doctrine and military strategy. This doctrine, known as "Mao's 10 Principles of War," was subsequently used throughout the war with Japan and against Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist Chinese army. (18:96) Since the primary purpose of this paper is to explore Sun Tzu's influence on Mao's leadership and strategy, this chapter will compare each of Mao's ten principles to Sun Tzu's thirteen axioms.

Mao listed his 10 principles as follows:

1. The Principle of Aim: To Mao, this principle described the objective of warfare: "to annihilate the enemy, not to capture or hold a city or

region." (18:96) This principle is in direct conflict with Sun Tzu who states "To capture the enemy's army is better than to destroy it." (3:77)

2. The Principle of Mobile Concentration: Mao's Principle of Mobile Concentration is pure Sun Tzu. Mao says of this principle, "the most effective type of warfare is that in which the forces are invincibly superior to the enemy's, so that a relatively small group may concentrate its power against the weakest part of an enemy's defense." (18:96) Sun Tzu said, "When ten to the enemy's one, surround him; when five times his strength, attack him; if double his strength, divide him; if equally matched, engage him; if weaker numerically, be capable of withdrawing." (3:80)

3. The Principle of Annihilation: This principle is a reemphasis of Mao's Principle of Aims, with an added argument against a war of attrition: "It is better to destroy one opposing enemy than to harm 10." (18:97)

4. The Principle of Fighting on the Move: This principle corresponds to Sun Tzu's axiom of Manoeuvre. Mao said fighting on the move takes into account "sudden assaults and retreats in order to attack the opposing force while they are on the move." (18:97) Sun Tzu said, "war is based on deception. Move when it is advantageous and create situations by dispersal and concentration of forces." (3:106)

5. The Principle of Offensive: This principle states that the primary aim of the army is to attack, not to retreat. Mao warned that "he (the enemy) must not be allowed to assume the offensive." (18:97) Sun Tzu said, "keep him under strain and wear him down." (3:68)

6. The Principle of Surprise Attack: Mao's Principle of Surprise Attack encourages the military leader to "spring attacks when and where the enemy least expects them." (18:97) Sun Tzu agrees: "The doctrine of war is to follow the enemy situation in order to decide on battle. Therefore at first be

shy as a maiden. When the enemy gives you an opening be swift as a hare and he will be unable to withstand you." (3:140)

7. The Principle of Continuous Attack: This principle states, "If an attack is once mounted, it must be continued; the troops cannot consider their fatigue or hunger." (18:97) This contradicts Sun Tzu who said, "pay heed to nourishing the troops; do not unnecessarily fatigue them." (3:135).

8. The Principle of Autonomy: According to Mao, "There must be a high degree of autonomous operation. The chain of command is of almost no tactical significance. The commander's main function is to set an example of energetic courage for his own troops." (18:98) Sun Tzu agrees: "to maintain a host, one must first assign responsibilities to the generals and their assistants." (3:91)

9. The Principle of Unity: Mao believed that "although each unit functions separately, there must be a high command to follow the actions and formulate the campaign." (18:98) In this respect, he agrees with Sun Tzu who said, "the supreme requirements of a generalship are a clear perception, the harmony of his host, a profound strategy coupled with far-reaching plans, an understanding of the seasons, and an ability to examine the human factors." (3:87)

10. The Principle of Military Spirit: To Mao, this principle meant that "every conceivable thought of possible defeat must be eliminated from the army and replaced with an iron will to win." (18:98) Sun Tzu agrees: "When the general is contemptuous of his enemy and his officers love to fight, their ambitions soaring as high as the azure clouds and their spirits as fierce as hurricanes, this is a situation in respect to morale." (3:95)

When describing Mao's leadership traits the best approach is to think of him as a revolutionary and a student of Chinese classics and history. The

former dictated how he would utilize the military, and the latter would determine his leadership style.

According to Lui Shao-ch'i, Chairman of the People's Republic, "The historical experience of the Chinese has confirmed them in the belief that man's dedication, imagination, courage and perseverance--under the infallible guidance of the Communist party--can prevail against material and technical superiority." (17:674) Mao echoes several of these traits in speaking out against what he perceived as a lack of proper emphasis on physical education, stating "The principle aim of physical education is military heroism. . . such military heroism as courage, dauntlessness, audacity and perseverance are all a matter of will." (10:157) Mao's primary leadership characteristics then are courage, physical fitness, perseverance, dedication, imagination, and discipline. However, of these six traits which he demonstrated throughout his life, both militarily and politically, heroism or courage is the "primary"; all others appear to come as a natural consequence of being courageous. In describing courage, Mao stated the following:

We must not, because we are undergoing the suffering of a war more cruel than any seen in the past, immediately capitulate; nor must we, under the influence of a long war, suddenly lose our endurance and give way to lassitude. . . all we are afraid of is getting killed. . . and if we do not fear death, then what is there to fear about the enemy? (10:285)

It is this very raw courage that Mao speaks of as one of his military principles to defeat Chaing Kai-shek: "To give full play to our style of fighting--courage in battle, no fear of sacrifice or fatigue, and continuous fighting." (10:292)

As a young man in Changsha attending middle school, Mao and his friends became "physical culturists." They hiked through the fields and over mountains in extreme weather, swam in cold streams, and slept on frozen ground. (8:177) It was during this period that Mao wrote an essay titled "The Study of Physical Culture":

Exercise should be savage and rude. To be able to leap on horseback, and to shoot at the same time; to go from battle to battle; to shake the mountains by one's cries, and the colors of the sky by one's roars of anger; to have the strength to uproot mountains like Hsiang Yu and the audacity to pierce the mark like Yu Chi--all this is savage and rude and has nothing to do with delicacy. In order to progress in exercise, one must be savage. (8:177)

Physical fitness would continue to play an important role throughout Mao's life. He contended that unless the people were fit and strong, they would be afraid as soon as they saw the enemy and would therefore be unable to attain their goal of being respected. To exemplify his continued stance on physical fitness, Mao swam the Yangste River at the age of sixty-four. (20:155)

Mao demonstrated his perseverance during the historic "Long March." This journey required that he first break through four lines of Kuomintang forces which included fortifications and then march approximately 100,000 soldiers and civilians through 6,000 miles of hostile territory. For Mao, this drive was maintained by his dedication to freeing his people from what he called "the Japanese imperialist and its running dog, the Chinese traitors." His dedication sprang from two sources: his Marxist-Leninist beliefs and China's history in driving out invaders. "The Chinese people is (sic) not only famous throughout the world for its endurance and industriousness; it is also a freedom loving people with a rich revolutionary tradition. . . . Some people

have ridiculed us as advocates of the theory of the omnipotence of revolutionary war. This is not a bad thing; it is good, and it is Marxist." (10:165-291)

His imagination is reflected in his writings. The foundation of Mao's imagination lay in his knowledge of Chinese classical history and his ability as a communicator. Mao understood this combination and used the classics to "shock and provoke the emotions of his audience" into military and political action. (8:237) For Mao, poetry served as a primary creative outlet. Robert Payne in his book Portrait of a Revolutionary: Mao Tse-tung, in describing a couple of Mao's favorite poems, said "they are concerned with the pleasures of hunting down the enemy in winter amidst frozen romantic landscapes and the jingling of coats of mail. . . . Mao's furious imagination is also at home in them--he quotes from them often, and he echoes them in his own poems." (7:231) This is evidenced in the poem Mao wrote during the Long March from Kiangsi to Yenan:

The Red Army fears not the trails of a distant march;
To them a thousand mountains, ten thousand rivers are nothing;
Before their eyes the Five Ridges ripple like little waves,
And the mountain peaks of Wumeng are like mud balls beneath
their feet.
Warm are the cloud-topped cliffs washed by the River of Golden
Sand,
Cold are the iron chains that span the Tatu River.
The myraid snows of Minshan only make them happier,
And when the three Armies have crossed, each face is smiling.
(10:283)

Perhaps the greatest evidence of Mao's powerful imagination is in his Quotations from Chairman MAO TSE-TUNG, also called "The Little Red Book." According to the New York Times, this book had sold over 250,000 copies

outside of China proper as of 1967. (5:ii) Additionally, its publisher ranks it with Marx and Engle's Communist Manifesto, Hitler's Mein Kampf, and Tom Paine's Common Sense as having the ability to persuade and to inflame great masses of people. Dr. A. Doak Barnett, Professor of Government, Columbia University, comments that:

Many of the sayings quoted in this volume may sound, to some, like platitudinous Marxist-Leninist abstractions. But they are much more than that. They are sermons aimed at creating dedicated revolutionaries, and prescriptions designed to provide them with a practical guide on how to conduct uninterrupted revolution. (5:v)

The final attribute--discipline--was necessary to enforce uniformity in the party. Mao stated, "the whole party must obey a uniform discipline; the individual must obey the organization; the minority must obey the majority; lower ranks must obey higher ranks; and the whole party must obey the Centre." (10:3290) Perhaps the reason that Mao sought to force his generals to this disciplined view of command was his fear that they might turn to Warlordism. Discipline played such a strong role in Mao's views that he stated, "the three main roles of discipline are as follows: obey orders in all your actions, do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses, turn in everything captured." (5:145)

Mao's desire to be followed and thought of as a leader in the classical sense was profound. This was expressed in his poems and in his own personal writings. How effective he was in this endeavor is probably best expressed by Lin Pao, leader of the First Red Army and a comrade on the Long March, who advises aspiring military and political leaders to "Study Chairman Mao's writings, follow his teachings and act according to his instruction." (5:vi)

In summary, Mao was a successful commander because his people believed in him. To earn this respect, Mao exhibited six essential leadership traits: courage, physical fitness, perseverance, dedication, imagination, and discipline. These characteristics were exemplified throughout Mao's drive to push and pull China into a dominant position of leadership in Asia and to acceptance by the world as a super power. Yet it must be kept in mind that it was Sun Tzu's military strategy, combined with Mao's leadership style, that provided the final equation which enabled Mao to be successful.

Chapter Five

SUMMARY

We should carefully study the lessons which were learned in past wars at the cost of blood and which have been bequeathed to us. . . . We must absorb conclusions thus reached to the test of our own experiences and absorb what is useful, reject what is useless and add what is specifically our own.(3:55)

The main focus of this project was to provide a review of two successful military commanders: Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung. According to the writings of Sun Tzu, successful leaders are those who understand and practice his thirteen axioms of war. The thirteen axioms also included his views of a commander's traits which were described in Chapter Three. To Sun Tzu, these traits were indicators of a successful commander when utilized with his other twelve axioms.

Mao Tse-tung, an intense nationalist, believed that China's past held the solution for her contemporary problems. This undoubtedly is why Sun Tzu, a legendary Chinese general, had such a strong influence on his military views. In explaining his success as a military commander, Mao said "there is nothing mysterious about war, which is a process governed by laws." (13:65) In essence, Mao Tse-tung incorporated Sun Tzu's treatise and then updated it to conform to his political views. A careful study of Mao Tse-tung's 10 strategy principles for defeating Chiang Kai-shek shows a significant influence from Sun Tzu's thirteen axioms.

On comparing the military strategy of Mao Tse-tung with that of Sun Tzu, it is obvious that Sun Tzu's influence was profound. As a matter of fact, there is really only one issue on which they totally disagree: protracted warfare. Sun Tzu felt that a lengthy armed conflict would be detrimental to keeping the support of the people. He stated that "there has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefited." (3:73) Thus, he felt that offensive strategy was more important than defensive strategy because the object was to end a war quickly so as not to be a strain on the people.

Mao viewed protracted warfare from a revolutionary perspective. He felt that a revolutionary force held the support of the people and could therefore "move among the masses like a fish in water." (10: 266) To those who failed to understand this argument, he added "the popular masses are like water, and the army is like a fish. How, then, can it be said that when there is water, a fish will have difficulty in preserving its existence?" (10:287)

Thus, Mao is recognized as a profound military strategist in the area of protracted warfare. Specifically, he is noted for his three stages of guerrilla warfare: strategic defensive, strategic stalemate, and strategic counter-offensive. Mao refers to these stages when discussing his war against Japan: "It is impossible to predict the concrete situations in the three stages." (21:93) By this remark, he was referring to Japan (strategic defensive) becoming overextended in its offensive and being harrassed by conventional mobile warfare. This would lead to strategic stalemate as the Japanese forces began to experience shortages of troops. This phase called for continual guerrilla attacks supplemented by mobile forces. The strategy here is to avoid decisive engagements, unless one is completely sure of victory. Finally,

Mao's forces would begin their strategic counteroffensive, combining guerilla and conventional forces. (20:18-19)

These three stages of conflict had a strong influence on other Asian leaders such as Generals Troung and Giap of Vietnam. As a matter of fact, it was not uncommon for newsmen reporting during the Viet Nam conflict to make comments like "we are on the verge of passing into Stage III," when referencing escalation periods. (21:92)

Mao's view of warfare is described aptly by Col. Francis F. Fuller, a long-time student of Mao Tse-tung and Chinese military affairs, in his article, "Mao Tse-tung: Military Thinker":

The fact that Mao was a military genius is apparent to one who studies with objectivity his rise to power in China from 1927 to 1945 . . . this genius lies in the fields of paramilitary warfare, psychologically waged. Indeed, it would be less misleading to call his guerrilla warfare parasitic cannibalism. (15:139-145)

How, then, does Mao define leadership for himself and for his commanders, and what influence does Sun Tzu have in the formulation of this leadership style? There is some argument that Sun Tzu did influence Mao's leadership style. Mao himself, on numerous occasions, quotes Sun Tzu: "There is a saying in the book of Sun Tzu Wu, the great military scientist of ancient China, 'Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat.' We should not take this saying lightly." (12:132)

Quotes such as these indicate that Sun Tzu did influence Mao's military strategy. They are not, however, examples of Sun Tzu's influence on Mao's leadership attributes. As a matter of fact, Mao disagrees with Sun Tzu concerning the proper relationship between a military commander and his political leaders. Although Sun Tzu understood the relationship between war

and politics, he separated the responsibility for each in accordance with the leader's task. According to Sun Tzu, "He whose generals are able and not interfered with by the sovereign will be victorious." (3:83)

Mao disagrees. He felt that his military leaders must not only understand the relationship between war and politics, but subordinate their military skills to their political responsibilities. In 1929, Mao Tse-tung as Political Commissar of the Fourth Red Army, wrote a paper titled "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party" which contended that "They (some military leaders) do not understand that the Chinese Red Army is an armed body for carrying out the political task of the revolution." (17:670) Marshal P'eng Teh-huai, commander of the Third Army and his senior general and P.L.A. Chief of Staff, Huang K'o-ch'eng, were purged for their failure to understand this fundamental belief. (21:671) Therefore, Mao Tse-tung's leadership values appeared to be formed more by his own environment, his communist beliefs, and his study of the classics than by one prominent classical leader.

Both of these commanders described a list of attributes necessary to be a good leader. Courage and discipline (strictness) were specifically mentioned by both Mao Tse-tung and Sun Tzu. For Mao, courage was being able to demonstrate the aggressiveness necessary to defeat an enemy, while discipline was related to party uniformity. Sun Tzu saw courage as being able to "achieve victory by seizing opportunity without hesitation" (3:65) and discipline as building respect for the commander. Courage and discipline are characteristics repeatedly associated with successful commanders. Therefore, it seems appropriate to speculate that these two attributes are as relevant today as they were two thousand years ago.

But although Mao Tse-tung and Sun Tzu agreed on the importance of these two attributes, they disagreed on the relationship between the military commander and the state. Mao saw the military commander as subordinate to the state: his role as a military leader was secondary to his primary role as a protagonist of the political system. The reason for this approach is made clear in his statement on the mission of the Red Army: "to arouse the masses of people through agitation and propaganda . . . to organize the aroused masses. . . to disintegrate the enemy. . . demoralize, confuse and reduce him to general ineffectiveness." (15:142)

Mao's leadership characteristics make sense only when viewed from a nationalist perspective. Just how much of an influence China's history and tradition had on Mao's political views is evidenced in the selected works of Mao, where it is calculated that there are more than five quotations from Confucius to every one from Marx. (8:240) Yet, it is important to note that Mao was able to synthesize this past influence into a workable strategy for China's present struggles.

As an example, the fact that Mao derived a large portion of his military strategy from Sun Tzu should not distract from the fact that Mao was himself recognized as a great military strategist. In particular, he was noted for his planning of protracted war. He has been credited with developing a theory of guerrilla warfare which was broken down into three stages: strategic defensive, strategic stalemate, and strategic counteroffensive. (20:18) In 1956, Dr. Katzenbach, Director of the Defense Studies Program at Harvard University, said:

Among the Communist Vietminh in Indochina, among the Huks in the Phillipines, and the insurgents in Malaya, Mao's writings are gospel. What Lenin did on the subject of imperialism and

Marx on Capitalism, Mao has done for antiindustrial warfare. That is why an understanding of Mao's military philosophy may be of rather more than casual interest. (16:16)

There is no doubt that Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung were both successful commanders. To again quote Col. Fuller, "Without Mao Tse-tung there would have been no Communist conquest of China." (15:139) The legendary Sun Tzu's success as a commander is attested to by the numerous quotes attributed to him by contemporary military leaders. Interestingly, both Mao Tse-tung and Sun Tzu spoke of leadership traits as being only a small part of what made a leader successful and emphasized strategy as the true measure of success. Sun Tzu stated, "What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy." (3:77) Mao developed his three stages of conflict based on this precept.

Therefore, it seems extremely important that we do not lose sight of the fact that Mao Tse-tung's and Sun Tzu's military strategies are still effective and should be continually studied and evaluated. Failure to remember this may be detrimental to the successful waging of war. One need only look back as far as the Korean and Vietnam wars to see the results of our failures. In both these conflicts, Sun Tzu's and Mao Tse-tung's influences were evident. However, instead of fighting against our opponents' strategies, we fought against their forces, a tactic which eventually cost us our victory.

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